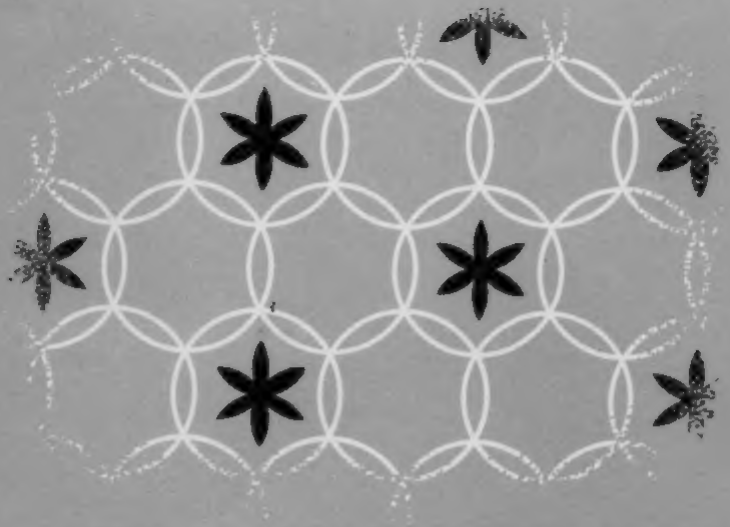
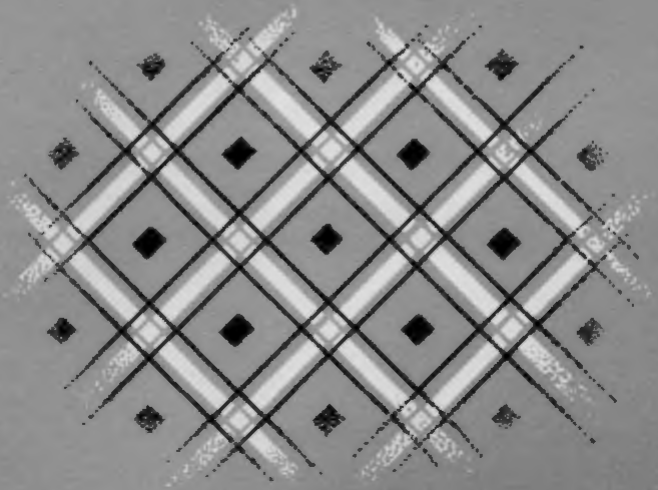


PATTERNS

for
community
living



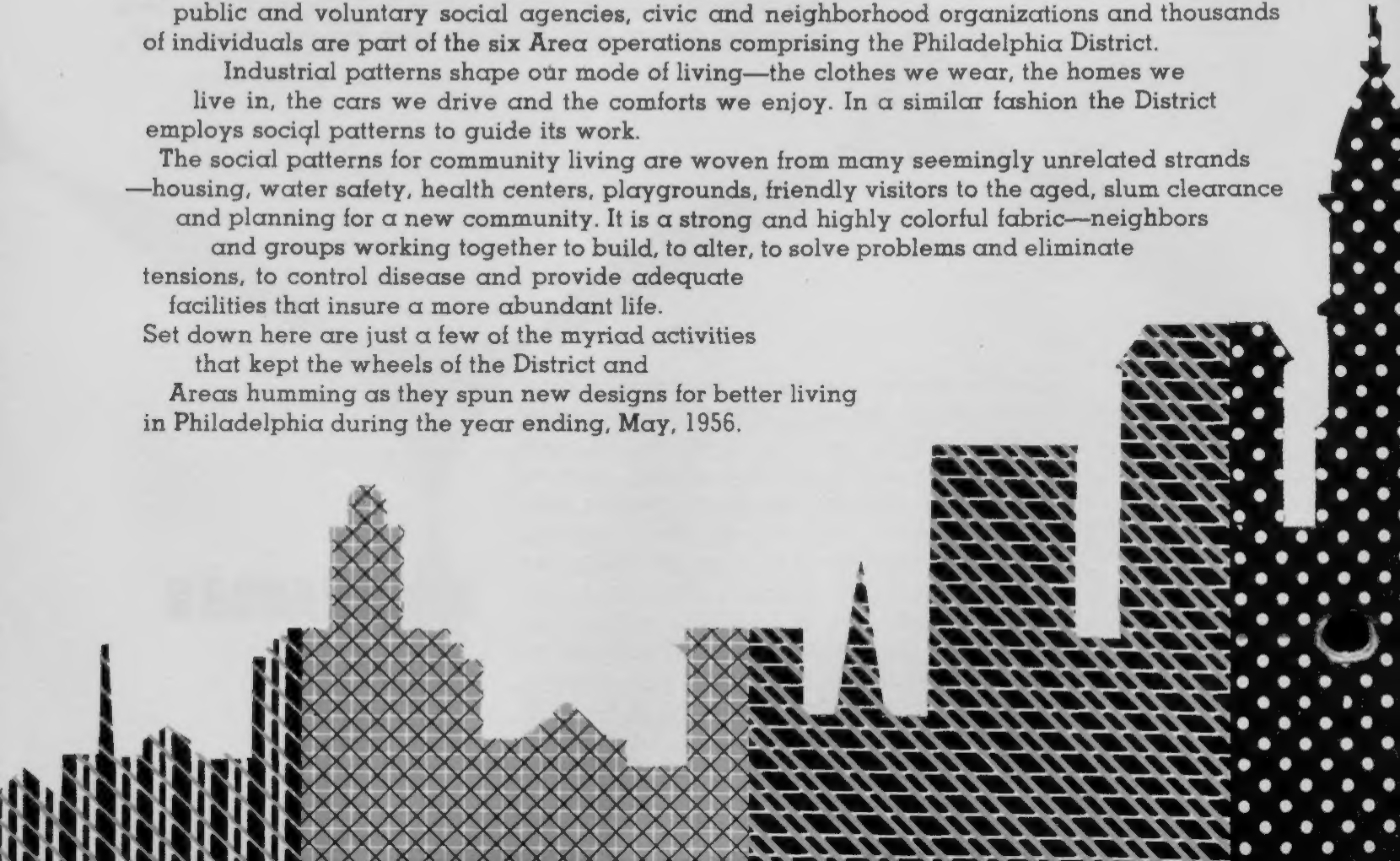
PATTERNS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING ARE CUT FROM MANY FABRICS.

One of the city's most effective pattern makers is the Health and Welfare Council whose 185 public and voluntary social agencies, civic and neighborhood organizations and thousands of individuals are part of the six Area operations comprising the Philadelphia District.

Industrial patterns shape our mode of living—the clothes we wear, the homes we live in, the cars we drive and the comforts we enjoy. In a similar fashion the District employs social patterns to guide its work.

The social patterns for community living are woven from many seemingly unrelated strands —housing, water safety, health centers, playgrounds, friendly visitors to the aged, slum clearance and planning for a new community. It is a strong and highly colorful fabric—neighbors and groups working together to build, to alter, to solve problems and eliminate tensions, to control disease and provide adequate facilities that insure a more abundant life.

Set down here are just a few of the myriad activities that kept the wheels of the District and Areas humming as they spun new designs for better living in Philadelphia during the year ending, May, 1956.



RECREATION

Lifeguards were withdrawn from Pennypack Creek because of contaminated waters. Children who continued to use the stream faced dangers of drowning and disease. Northeast Area, following a discussion with recreation authorities, and subsequent study of the pollution problem, recommended that (1) the Department of Health set suitable standards for natural swimming as soon as possible, (2) action be taken to clean up Pennypack Creek for swimming (3) or swimming facilities be developed in the area. Causes of contamination have been checked and the Area is pressing for review of standards needed to restore the stream to safe, supervised use by area bathers. Similar recreational plans throughout the city are developed by hundreds of Area leaders who, with assistance from the Education-Recreation Division, study, advise and recommend patterns of action to public and private agencies.

HOUSING

In South Philadelphia parts of the area had deteriorated to such an extent that improvement is virtually impossible. Many dwellings are rapidly becoming slums because of neglect and lack of essential services. How to correct this problem without seriously impairing the security of many families is a grave problem facing Southern Area and the Council's Family and Children's Divisions. The Area has been concerned in site selection for public low rent housing, enforcement of the Housing Code, advising local councils of zoning change proposals which could downgrade neighborhoods and efforts to reduce density of population. In a metropolis noted for its homes citizens of the Area committees are ever alert to the needs for decent housing, the elimination of slums and adequate facilities to serve the populace.

HEALTH

Tuberculosis and the high mortality rate among infants in North Philadelphia are some of the health problems with which the Area has worked for several years. North Central Area has cooperated with the Health Department in venereal, rat and tuberculosis control campaigns. Recognizing the severity of the problem, the Area studied health education needs and recommended the assignment of a health education staff worker to the new District Health Center, even before construction. The worker was assigned and is now working with local groups in the field of health education, referral to existing health services and long range planning for the reduction of health hazards. Through community knowledge of the available services a better health pattern can be shaped. Throughout the city, the several Area forces, teaming with the Council's Health Division, seek answers to the problems of health.

COUNSELLING

Residents of communities are not always aware of the many services offered to them. One local group decided to improve this condition. The AFL-CIO, in cooperation with the newly established Northern Area, conducted a series of union counselor training programs in referral techniques and informative sessions on available health and welfare services. Through this medium twenty-seven representatives from union locals were equipped to refer fellow workers with problems to the agencies set up to help them. Sessions dealing with public assistance, family service, mental health, illness in the home, legal aid, hospitalization, services to older people and the function of the Community Information and Referral Service, were offered. Thus another pattern of service was designed.

TEAMWORK

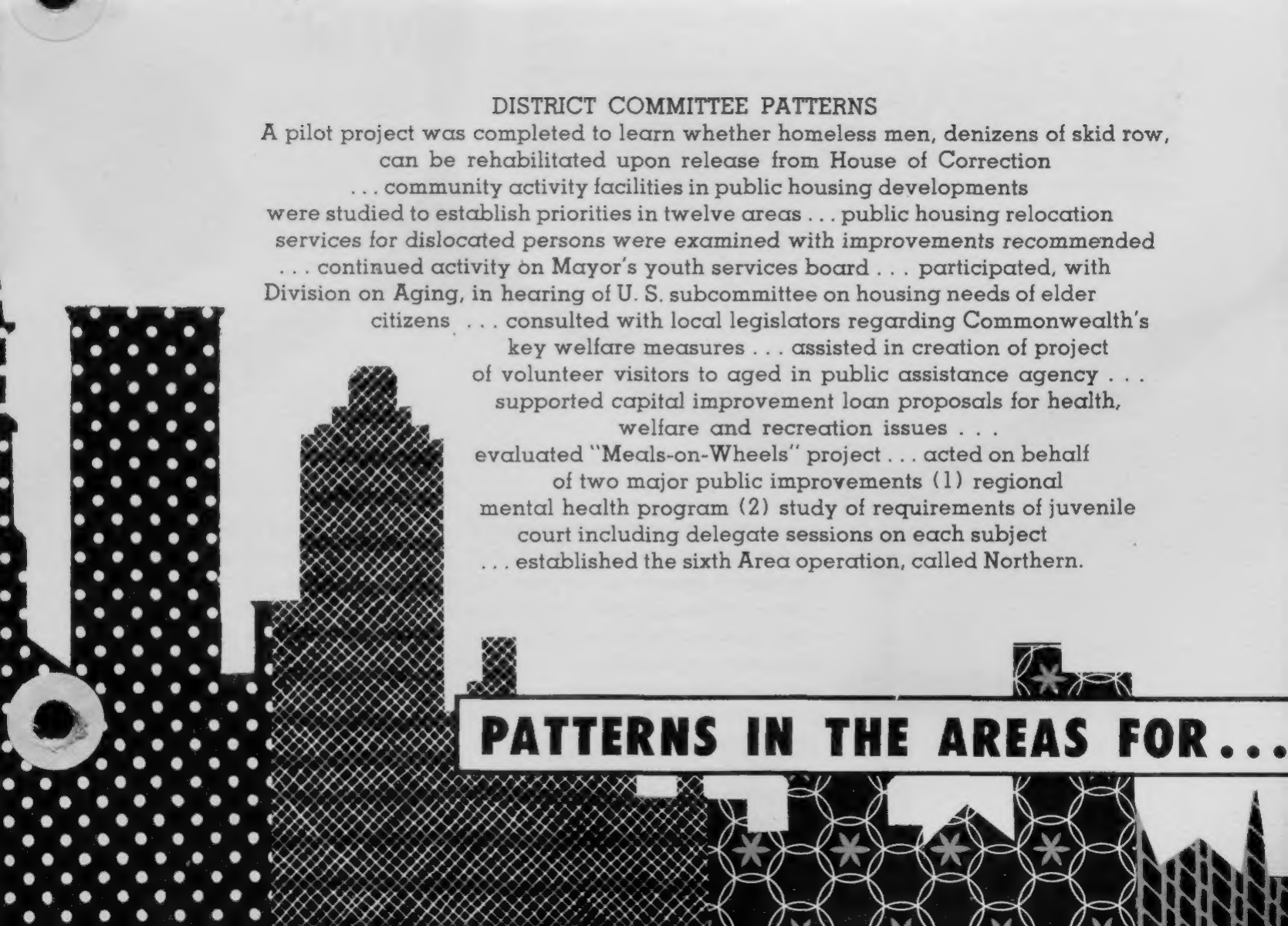
The low-lying section of the city encompassing waste land, city dumps, oil refineries, International Airport and unsightly marshes is the residence of 16,000 people. Within ten years a new town will rise on this site—a city of approximately 50,000. Advice of West Area is being sought in planning health, welfare and recreation services which Eastwick will need and for which the physical planning of the Redevelopment Authority should take heed. The Area has recommended the establishment of a branch Community Information and Referral Service in the Southwest. The program will be geared to referring cases to services existing elsewhere, to study the trends of local need and to recommend types of service for the area as the pattern of the new community's future unfolds. Teamwork in physical planning characterizes the operations in all Areas.

NEIGHBORHOODS

The many neighborhood groups serving the block organizations of Northwest Area are the special concern of the Germantown Community Council. As the Area's spokesman, the Council looks to the many groups which daily serve these neighborhood councils. Among these are the Twenty-first Ward Community Council, the West Oak Lane Coordinating Council, Westside Neighborhood Council, Morton Neighborhood Council, Emlen Federation of Civic Organizations and the Wister Neighborhood Council which have been effectively at work on questions of human relations, physical planning and housing in the Northwest Area. The Northwest pattern of neighborhood groups, cooperating in effecting a design for more abundant community living, typifies the work of all Areas in their day to day program of fabricating the cloth from which tomorrow's Philadelphia will be made.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE PATTERNS

A pilot project was completed to learn whether homeless men, denizens of skid row, can be rehabilitated upon release from House of Correction . . . community activity facilities in public housing developments were studied to establish priorities in twelve areas . . . public housing relocation services for dislocated persons were examined with improvements recommended . . . continued activity on Mayor's youth services board . . . participated, with Division on Aging, in hearing of U. S. subcommittee on housing needs of elder citizens . . . consulted with local legislators regarding Commonwealth's key welfare measures . . . assisted in creation of project of volunteer visitors to aged in public assistance agency . . . supported capital improvement loan proposals for health, welfare and recreation issues . . . evaluated "Meals-on-Wheels" project . . . acted on behalf of two major public improvements (1) regional mental health program (2) study of requirements of juvenile court including delegate sessions on each subject . . . established the sixth Area operation, called Northern.



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HEALTH AND WELFARE COUNCIL, INC.

A United Community Campaign Agency

J. PETER WILLIAMS, *President*
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